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Peach Association

August 12, 2005

Docket Clerk Fruit & Vegetable Programs Agricultural Marketing Service U. S. Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave, SW Washington, DC 20250-0237

Re:

Comments on Docket No. FV05-82-01PR

Federal Register August 3, 2005

Page 44525

To Whom It May Concern:

Obviously, the California Canning Peach Association strongly supports the Department's proposed tree pull program.

However, we have several minor suggested language changes.

1. Age of eligible orchards.

It appears there is a minor drafting error on age of trees. Our original request covered bearing acres less than 18 years old. The industry commentary published in the Federal Register (Page 44527, second column, Lines 49-51) refers to "trees removed under this program would be 17 or fewer years old". However, the proposed rule states that "trees to be removed must be fruit-bearing and have been planted after 1988 and before the 2002 calendar years". We believe that this section should be amended to read planted after 1987 and before the 2003 calendar year. This would match the program intent to remove bearing acres less than 18 years old.

2. Applications for Participation.

The proposed rule states that applications can be obtained from the CCPA office at 2300 River Plaza Drive #110, Sacramento, CA 95833. In order to facilitate grower participation, we would suggest that the language be modified to also include the CCPA's field offices which are located in the two major peach growing areas.



Applications could also be obtained and submitted to our two field office locations as follows:

Yuba City

335 Teegarden Avenue, Suite A Yuba City, CA 95991

Phone: (530) 673-8526 Fax: (530) 673-2673

Modesto

1704 Herndon Road Ceres, CA 95307

Phone: (209) 537-0715 Fax: (209) 537-1043

3. <u>Implementation.</u>

The industry commentary reads "implementation of the proposed diversion program would begin at the end of calendar year 2005 and tree removal would have to be completed by May 1, 2006." We believe that implementation (tree removal) should be possible immediately following CCPA's written notification to a grower that his tree pull application has been approved. (This will allow growers to prepare their land for planting alternative crops prior to the commencement of winter rains). In order to achieve the maximum industry benefit, growers must be able to pull trees immediately after the final program rules are published and their applications have been verified and approved by CCPA.

I would be happy to provide the Department with any additional information necessary to evaluate our proposed language changes.

Thank you for you attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Rich Hudgins
President & CEO